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241 fern and low bushes and the second planting never yields as good crops as the first. Because of this, the natives try to clear new land each season, going farther and farther from their villages. There is little effort to keep the fires within bounds and if the season is dry [361] large areas of uncut timber are often burned over. The result is a wholesale destruction of large timber and the final exhaustion of the lands about a village. When this occurs, the village must be moved to new territory but, curiously enough, the natives never gave land exhaustion as a reason for such movements. The village will move [791] on the advice of an *ombiasy* ("medicine-man"), who will assign some supernatural reason for the crop failures.

241 423 596 When the *tany* is inconveniently far from the village, the people camp there, building small, temporary houses. Among the Menabe the members of each lineage formerly camped and worked together, as a protection from enemy raids. When a section of land was to be cleared and burned, the heads of families marked out sectors along its front and each family cleared back into the jungle as far as it thought necessary to provide food for the year. The families thus had strips of crop land of approximately equal width, but of a length proportionate to their industry. The crops were the absolute property of the family, but the land reverted to the lineage and was reapportioned at the next burning. At the present time, this method has largely lapsed, and families are holding and working their *tany* independently.

241 Seed for rice and other crops is usually collected shortly after the harvest and kept in joints of bamboo, small cloth bags, etc. These are hung up in the dwelling, over the fireplace, so that the smoke will help to protect them from insects. Sometimes wood ashes are mixed with the seed for the same reason. In a few houses I found [513] soft bags of matting, stuffed with seed rice, in use as pillows. Seed beans are sometimes kept in peculiar baskets made in imitation of clusters of bean pods (Fig. 1, c, d).

241 789 As far as I could learn, no special importance is attached to the selection of seed. There are no seed gathering ceremonies, no charms are placed with the seed, and there is no attempt to increase its yield by magical means. Seeds are usually soaked in warm water before planting, but this is not a universal practice.

Apparently no rites to promote fertility are performed at planting time. This is rather curious in view of the wide occurrence of such rites in connection with Asiatic rice culture, but I am convinced that if they ever existed among the Tanala they have been forgotten.

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Friday, January 1, 1904, was, in the Tanala style, the second day 805
of the tenth week of the sixth month of the year *Adalo* (the first year of a cycle). Once this correspondence has been established it is easy to prepare a comparative calendar.

To count the days, the *ombiasy* has a piece of bamboo pierced with twenty-eight holes, arranged in groups of two or three, according to the number of days in each week. A pin is used as a marker, being moved daily.

The Menabe apparently lack such bamboo calendars, but keep day counts by means of notched wooden tallies and knotted strings. These are sometimes used for other numerical records as well.

DIVINATION BY THE STARS

The Tanala Menabe do not forecast events from the stars, but 787
they know that such divination exists and believe it to be effective. Apparently it is sometimes practiced by visiting *ombiasy* of the Antaimorona tribe, but they guard the secret. Information received from the Tanala is based on hearsay. They say that divination by the stars requires a lifetime of study, and that one who devotes himself to it must expect many years of poverty. He must go out to watch the stars every clear night, so has to sleep in the daytime and cannot work on his land. The student of the stars goes to a high open place and keeps glancing at the sky and then glancing away again. He must not look at the stars long or fixedly, for each man has one which is his special watcher or guardian and if he looks directly at this he will die. Even among the Antaimorona I was unable to learn whether there were any fixed rules for this divination.

SPELLS

A very striking feature of Tanala magic is the almost complete 788
absence of any belief in the efficacy of spoken formulae. Practically all magical practices are associated with some material object, which is the source of the power exercised. Even in the manufacture of charms spoken formulae are rare and, when used, they are variable in form and are considered of little importance.

MANUFACTURE AND USE OF CHARMS

The Tanala believe that the future is fixed by Fate, but also in the 777
efficacy of charms. I have never found an *ombiasy* who was conscious 789
of this inconsistency until I brought it to his attention. Even when
the course of coming events has been determined by divination, the

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777 789 future can nearly always be modified by the proper magic. This magic takes the form of a charm which is worn, soaked in water which is then drunk or bathed in, etc. Even medicines given for the cure of illness always follow the charm pattern.

The native attitude toward charms is of considerable interest in view of the theories of primitive magic now extant. Their manufacture is a thoroughly mechanical process. They can be made by anyone who knows the proper formulae and adheres to them. Many persons who make no pretensions to being *ombiasy* are familiar with one or more charms which they regularly manufacture and sell. The manufacture of most charms is not accompanied by invocations and there is no belief that the charm is inhabited by a ghost or spirit, or even that it serves as a link between its owner and any Being. The charm owes its efficacy to its various ingredients and to the exact proportions and manner in which they are compounded. The magical potency of the finished product is, however, greater than the sum of the potencies of its ingredients, in fact the ingredients individually have little or no potency. The charm retains its potency indefinitely, its strength increasing rather than decreasing with age. Some charms are so strong that they become animate and can move and speak, but even then they do not require sacrifices or special service.

[178] The foregoing facts strongly suggest the presence of a belief in *mana*, i.e., impersonal magical power, which is concentrated and made available by the charm, but I am convinced that no such concept is consciously present. There is no native word for such power and I found great difficulty in explaining the idea to even the most intelligent of my informants. The Tanala are thoroughly convinced that the charms possess supernatural power which is exerted in favor of their owners, but no ideas as to the source or nature of this power, or as to the exact way in which it is applied, have been formulated. The natives are unconscious of any need for formulation. In this they are quite comparable to persons in our own culture who believe in the efficacy of lucky coins, etc., without being able to explain why they are efficacious.

The Tanala have charms for every phase of their existence and a complete list would be a catalogue of all their activities and vicissitudes. There are charms to aid the individual, the family and the village. Individual charms are the most numerous. They include charms to bring general good fortune, to avert or cure illness, to avert specific injuries, as from gunshot wounds, lightning or crocodiles, to frustrate enemies and render their charms innocuous, to

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give success in all possible activities, to bring wealth and to kill enemies. Charms for the family or lineage include those to bring general good fortune, to protect the crops from hail or locusts, to avert sickness, etc. Lastly, each village has its charm or charms which are given to it at the time it is founded and protect it from pestilence or enemy attack or both. 777 789

Most charms are compounds, but there are a few exceptions. A bracelet of thick brass or copper wire (Fig. 23, c) protects the wearer from all sorts of malevolent ghosts and consequently from attacks of vertigo, drowning and, some believe, crocodiles. Vertigo and drowning are thought due to the attack of spirits, while crocodiles may be under spirit control. No magic is connected with the manufacture of these bracelets. They are made by the Imerina and sold by all traders. 777 [438]

Large, roughly spherical beads of translucent white glass, half an inch in diameter, were formerly considered powerful charms to insure general good fortune. They were usually worn attached to a lock of hair (Fig. 22, f). They were the most suitable gift from a man to a beloved wife or child and were highly valued, good examples being worth as much as an ox. At the present time they have largely gone out of use. These beads are not of native manufacture, and their source is unknown. They were probably obtained from the Arabs in early times. The wearing of other beads as charms is not a Tanala custom, but they are gradually coming into use as a result of contact with the plateau tribes. The use of beads as charms reaches its highest development among the Imerina, who distinguish at least fifty different sorts, each with its special magical quality.

A piece of vine which has turned back on itself and grown through the loop, forming a knot, or two twigs which have crossed each other and grown together, make an efficient love charm. It may be cut and used or sold by anyone who finds it. Such charms are never worn openly. [832]

Most charms are compounds. Vegetable substances predominate, but earth, insects, bones, etc., may also be incorporated. The mixture is put in a container of some sort so that it can be readily worn or carried. *Ody* mas (charms to obtain children) must be done up in cloth and a few other charms are not efficacious unless they are put up in wood. Usually, however, the container does not affect the powers of the charm and its form varies with the fancy of the maker. Most Tanala charms are put up in small, cylindrical

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must observe. If the patient dies, the *ombiasy* does not receive the final fee, but he retains the initial fee and is not punished, except by loss of prestige. In case of an epidemic the *ombiasy* gives protective medicine to everyone in the village.

As a rule the *ombiasy* is only applied to in serious cases. In every village there are old people of both sexes who treat minor ailments without any pretensions to magic. These practitioners use herb remedies, for the most part, and some of their medicines possess real value. Inflammation is relieved by cupping. The operator makes a small incision in the skin, places the tip of a horn over it, and exhausts the air by suction. The small end of the horn is covered with a lump of soft wax and when the vacuum has been formed this is pressed together with the tongue, sealing the opening (Fig. 23, h). The horn is left on until the suction has filled it with blood. Boils and abscesses are never lanced, but may be poulticed to bring them to a head. Fractures are treated by the *ombiasy* or by persons having a special charm for the purpose. In some cases the art seems to be hereditary in families. A decoction is made by boiling the leaves of various plants in water, or they are pounded and mixed with grease, and the limb is rubbed with this. The bone is set and the limb placed in leaves with a heavy bandage. No splints are used.

SLEIGHT OF HAND

The Tanala *ombiasy* make comparatively little use of sleight of hand. The idea that illness is due to some foreign body which has been thrown into the afflicted person seems to be lacking, so there is little reason to exercise it. However, some practitioners use sleight of hand to show their powers and impress their clientele. A Tanala *ombiasy* resident among the Betsileo staged an exhibition for me as follows: He spread a new mat on the floor and placed upon it two large bowls, one empty, the other filled with water. Beside these he laid a club made from half of a sawfish's saw. This, he said, was a sort of magician's wand. Anyone struck by it would die. For the exhibition, it simply increased the power of the other charms. When these objects had been arranged, he drew from his waistcloth a charm made from sticks of wood packed into the hollow of a small horn. He placed this, large end down, in the dish of water and allowed it to steep for about ten minutes. He then removed it and placed it in the dry bowl. After this, he asked me to give him something that he could chew up and swallow. I offered him a piece of ordinary paper about three inches square. He steeped this in the water for a short time, then folded it and pressed it to the

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789 open end of the charm, immersing both in the water. He repeated
756 this several times, asking me to examine it each time to be sure that he had not made a substitution. Then he swallowed the paper and drank most of the water, at least a quart and a pint. After this he rested for a moment, belched, and spat out a wad of thread. He told me to pick this up and draw on it. The thread ran down his throat and after pulling out about 15 feet of it I cut it off with a knife. The thread was ordinary commercial cotton. He had evidently swallowed a ball of it, holding the upper end in his mouth in some way.

After a short rest he asked me to get him a piece of glass and I gave him a fragment of broken bottle about 1½ inches long by ¾ inch wide. He treated this as he had the paper, then put it in his mouth and chewed up about half of it, swallowing it. There was no trickery in this part of the performance. He then drank more water from the bowl, which had been refilled, and asked that the dry bowl be held in front of him. After a short time he began to retch and spat into the bowl a double handful of dark blue berries about the size of huckleberries.

Following another rest he took a second piece of paper, went through the same performance as before, and spat out a live chameleon 7¼ inches long. I caught the animal, which was very active, and found slight bruises on either side of its neck, probably due to its having been held between his teeth.

Lastly, he took another piece of paper, repeated the performance, and spat out a live snake 16 inches long. This completed the show. The various objects produced must, of course, have been slipped into his mouth each time, but this was done very cleverly. He talked almost constantly and although I watched him closely I was unable to see when he made the transfer. His native audience was much impressed and seemed to believe that the transformations were authentic.

SORCERY

754 The Tanala Menabe seem to lack the almost hysterical fear of sorcery which characterizes the tribes of the east coast and plateau. They admit that a certain amount of it goes on, but trials for sorcery are rare and few stories about it are current. Sickness and ill fortune are usually ascribed to the malevolence of ghosts rather than men. All but one of my informants denied any first hand knowledge of the sorcerer's methods and none of them believed that they themselves had been the victims of sorcery.

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are selected for their poisonous qualities, but the other ingredients are considered magical. The cock's bill gives the dart sure direction and force, like a cock pecking, the rag from the piston bellows increases the force of the air, and the *hisika* wood, which is dark red, will cause the animal to bleed to the last drop.

The poison is made into a cake. Just before shooting a little of it is smeared on the head of the dart and a pinch put on the shooter's tongue. The Tanala say that this poison will kill a large lemur in four or five minutes and that it does not injure the flesh. It is possible to eat even the parts immediately about the wound. I suspect that the active principle in the poison comes from the *hisika* wood, or from some compound which it forms with the insect poisons, for the area within which effective blow-gun poison is known seems to correspond closely with the natural range of this tree.

In addition to the actual poison just described, there is a belief in magical poisons. One informant told me that if a blow-gun was rubbed with the juice of a certain plant all arrows shot from it would be poisonous. Another spoke of a medicine made from a certain root which was so deadly that if it was placed under a house everyone inside would suffer from stomach ache. The hunter inoculated himself with this by rubbing a little of it into a cut in his lower lip and thereafter all darts he shot would be poisonous.

The darts are carried in quivers of wood or bamboo with tight-fitting wooden covers to protect them from the constant rain (Fig. 24, c). Their maximum effective range is 50 to 60 yards.

The bow seems to have been known to all the Madagascar tribes, but the Tsimahety, in the northern part of the central plateau, were the only ones who used it in war. It is said to have been their main arm. Elsewhere it was little more than a toy and was rarely used by adults. The only Tanala bow seen was a toy (Fig. 28, b), but it is said that large boys formerly used them for hunting. The hunting bows were about 3 feet long and roughly made. The arrows were about 2 feet long and unfeathered. They were usually simply whittled to a point, but one informant had heard of iron arrowheads, made from bits of thin metal with a socket for the shaft.

WARFARE

The Tanala were not lacking in courage or fighting ability, as is proved by their long and successful resistance to the Hova empire, but they were one of the least warlike tribes in Madagascar. A *mélange* of defeated gentes, numerically weak and politically divided,